FEATURING BEST PRACTICES
OF STATE AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Provider Information

Service Provider Manuals on-line

Department of Medical Assistance Services
implemented this best practice
in August 1999

Qualifying under the
Best Practices catalogue

3   Provide Capabilities
33 Provide administrative support services
332 Provide electronic information systems

Best Practice Summary
(how it works, how you measure it)

The Department of Medical Assistance Services is utilizing its Internet website to distribute its provider manuals to approximately 44,220 hospitals, nursing homes, physicians, pharmacists and other health care professionals who provide health care services to the 682,455 individuals enrolled in the Virginia Medicaid Program.

The policies that those providers must follow in furnishing medical services to Medicaid recipients and the procedures they must use to claim reimbursement from DMAS are set forth in 30 unique provider manuals. These manuals describe the conditions of Medicaid eligibility, the services each type of provider is authorized to provide, the limitations on services, the need to obtain prior authorizations, detailed billing instructions and other information necessary to provide and bill for services. The system that has been used to develop, print and distribute provider manuals in the past has been costly and not always timely. In addition, the lack of

timely and up-to-date instructions has been a recurring source of complaints from the provider community.

A counting mechanism has been attached to the provider manual section of the website. A new system is being developed to determine the origins of the inquiries made that will give the department a clearer picture of where the users come from and what information they are retrieving.

Impact on the Process Organizational Performance (OUTCOMES)

DMAS has begun the process of converting all manuals to Portable Document Format (PDF) and placing them on the Internet. Twelve of the 30 manuals have been published on the Internet to date and the rest is expected to be placed on the DMAS web site by the summer of 2000.

By using the Internet, providers, researchers and the general public can instantly obtain the current manual (or individual chapters as desired) at no cost for printing and distribution. The manual can also be searched electronically for relevant sections or issues. Because of its enhanced searching capabilities, the information will be used by the agency's own Customer Service and Provider Helplines.

During fiscal year 1998-1999, the agency spent more than $75,000 to print manuals for providers and approximately $100,000 to distribute them. Once the system is fully implemented, it is expected that these costs will be significantly reduced. More importantly, the timeliness and speed in releasing manual updates will greatly improve the administration of the Medicaid program and the agency's relations with its business partners.

Best Practice Qualification

The Division of Strategic Planning & Administration believes this innovative use of technology enhances the manner in which the Department of Medical Assistance Services provides services to its customers. It will result in cost savings for the agency when fully implemented, improve the overall efficiency of operations, and advance the goals of electronic government

For Additional Information

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